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Environment and sustainable development

Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In its resolution 57/259, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to its fifty-eighth session on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa (UNCCD).

Pursuant to Article 1 of the Convention, the Plan of Implementation adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development called for strengthening the prevention and/or reduction of land degradation, rehabilitation of partly degraded land and reclamation of desertified land, in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, in order to maintain and restore land and to address poverty resulting from land degradation. The Summit identified the Convention as one of the tools for poverty eradication.

Furthermore, pursuant to Article 9 of the Convention, the Plan of Implementation calls for strengthening the preparation and implementation of national action programmes and subregional and regional action programmes as the central element of the strategy to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought.

At its fifty-seventh session, the General Assembly welcomed the decision taken by the Second Assembly of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) that the Facility shall be available to serve as a financial mechanism of the Convention and invited the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its sixth session to consider making the Facility a financial mechanism of the Convention. The Conference of the Parties will meet in Havana, Cuba, from 25 August to 5 September 2003.

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The General Assembly had also invited the Council of the Facility to finalize and adopt the operational programme on land degradation. The Council adopted that programme on 18 May 2003 at its May 2003 session.

Concerning the review of the implementation of the Convention, the first session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) was held in Rome from 11 to 22 November 2002 to assist the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (COP) in this regard in the light of experience gained at the national, subregional, regional and international levels, and to facilitate the exchange of information on measures adopted by the Parties, pursuant to article 26 of the Convention, in order to draw conclusions and to propose to the Conference concrete recommendations on further steps in the implementation of the Convention. The second session of the Committee will take place during the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties from 26 to 29 August 2003.

The General Assembly also noted with appreciation the increased number of developing countries that are parties to the Convention and that have adopted their national, subregional and regional action programmes, and urged the affected parties that have not yet done so to accelerate the process of elaboration and adoption of their action programmes, with a view to finalizing them as soon as possible. In this regard, the General Assembly also invited affected developing countries to place the implementation of their action programmes to combat desertification high among their priorities in their dialogue with their development partners.

The General Assembly noted the ongoing work of the liaison group of the secretariats and officers of the relevant subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Biological Diversity, and encouraged continuing cooperation to promote complementarities among the three secretariats while respecting their independent legal status.

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 57/259 the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to its fifty-eighth session on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

2. It also expressed its deep appreciation to the Government of Italy for the organization of the first session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention in Rome, at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, from 11 to 22 November 2002. The General Assembly also welcomed the outcomes of the Second Assembly of the Global Environment Facility, held in Beijing from 16 to 18 October 2002, particularly the decision on making land degradation, primarily desertification and deforestation, a new focal area of the Facility and recognized the strong commitment of the international community, to make the Facility available as a financial mechanism of the Convention. In this regard the General Assembly encouraged the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to take the appropriate decision to that effect at its next ordinary session in 2003.

II. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 57/259

A. Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

3. By its decision 1/COP.5 the Conference of the Parties (COP) decided to establish the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) and defined its terms of reference as a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties to assist it in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention. Accordingly, the Convention secretariat has undertaken various steps to facilitate the reporting process in preparation for the first session of the Committee.

4. The first session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention was held in Rome from 11 to 22 November 2002 to assist the Conference in reviewing the implementation of the Convention in the light of experience gained at the national, subregional, regional and international levels and to facilitate the exchange of information on measures adopted by the parties, pursuant to article 26 of the Convention, in order to draw conclusions and to propose to the Conference concrete recommendations on further steps in the implementation of the Convention.

5. By the same decision 1/COP.5, the Conference further decided that the review should focus on specific thematic issues identified by parties. Accordingly, the Conference identified seven key thematic topics for review, up to and including the seventh session of the Conference. These topics were reflected in the deliberations of the Committee.

6. In this regard, reports were submitted to the secretariat by 124 affected country parties (47 from Africa, 32 from Asia, 28 from Latin America and the Caribbean, 17 from northern Mediterranean, Central and Eastern European and other affected country parties), as well as 11 relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, eight intergovernmental organizations and 17 developed country parties.

7. Affected country parties further noted that thematic case studies contributed to experience sharing and reported on steps taken as required. They usefully demonstrated the relationship between combating desertification and eradicating poverty. In many cases, progress was shown to have been achieved on a wide front. The next cycle of information before the Committee could focus more on analysis of accomplishment, measurement of impact achieved and goals reached, while the recommendations by the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) on benchmarks and indicators should be applied in this work for affected developing country parties.

8. Affected country parties also noted that national action programmes (NAP) express a country's commitment to the Convention and underlined that while such programmes are in various stages of advancement or finalization — often with minimal external support — predictable financial resources, both domestic and international, for enabling activities under the Convention are clearly required to foster implementation, support policy formulation for sustainable land use, capacity-building, technical assistance in specific areas and for pre-feasibility studies.

9. In this regard affected country parties stressed that reports by developed country parties on their contributions to the UNCCD process should be more precise and complete so as to ensure that the reporting process before the Committee would be more balanced in reflecting the obligations of all parties.

10. Developed country parties recognized the Convention's global importance for sustainable development and poverty eradication and underlined the importance of promoting incentives for ownership, land tenure, access and use of productive natural resources to create an enabling framework for sustainable and equitable land use.

11. Developed country parties also acknowledged the merits of a political dialogue to foster implementation of the Convention and urged Governments to clarify the roles and influence of the national coordinating bodies (NCBs) and the national focal points (NFPs) within the national planning process. They also requested that more be done to incorporate the results of research and relevant projects into action programme implementation and impact monitoring.

12. The Committee on Science and Technology (CST) noted that not all of its recommendations had been fully taken into account and invited parties to better integrate CST activities into the national reports and the national action programmes and better involve members of the scientific community in these processes. Accordingly, it requested that at future CRIC sessions, each topic should contain elements to demonstrate the linkages between the state of knowledge on the particular topic, the extent and scale of impacts, the opportunities for mitigation and the policy implications, specifically including the implications for socio-economic and cultural policies.

13. United Nations agencies and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) submitted reports on relevant activities and recalled their traditional role in supporting policy formulation for sustainable development, technical assistance, capacity-building, information and data exchange. The degree of UNCCD mainstreaming in their procedures and programmes varies, and there appears to be a growing interest in synergy related issues.

14. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) contributed actively to the CRIC assessment. They noted that lack of funding had been the major barrier to implementation of the Convention and underlined the need for NGOs to be involved

in the mainstreaming and synergy process at all levels in order to ensure that synergies took effect at the field level. NGOs also requested the development of not only biophysical but also socio-economic benchmarks and indicators.

15. The second session of the Committee, will take place during the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties from 26 to 29 August 2003.

B. The World Summit on Sustainable Development

16. In response to requests received from the respective task managers, the secretariat of the Convention contributed to the Secretary-General's cluster report on land and agriculture issues covering chapters 10, 12 and 14 of Agenda 21, to the Secretary-General's report on institutional proceedings in the context of Agenda 21, and to other relevant Secretary-General's reports to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and its preparatory Committee.

17. Furthermore, the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs and the secretariat of the Convention established as a joint initiative an independent high-level body, the Panel of Eminent Personalities, to consider the poverty-environment nexus in the context of the implementation of the Convention, in April 2001. The Panel met two times and concluded its report at its second meeting, held in Agadez, Niger at the end of February 2002.

18. The report of the Panel, entitled "UNCCD: a Useful Tool for Sustainable Development and Poverty Alleviation", highlighted the complex relationship between land degradation and poverty, and suggests that the implementation of the Convention can have a significant positive impact in rural poverty reduction and environmental degradation, forced migration, and prevention of conflicts over scarce resources. It calls the international community to acknowledge the Convention as a poverty reduction tool and foster community-based rural area development programmes. The report of the Panel was submitted for consideration of the WSSD Preparatory Committee by the Government of Niger, and further publicized by the members of the Panel during the fourth meeting of the Preparatory Committee and the Summit itself.

19. The Panel also made an appeal, the Agadez Call, urging the international community to support sustained cooperation with developing countries that are affected by desertification, especially in Africa. The appeal urged developed countries to pay particular attention to the fight against desertification by taking appropriate measures to strengthen the implementation of the Convention as a primary tool for cooperation with developing affected countries.

20. In paragraph 7 (l) of the Plan of Implementation adopted by the Summit, the Convention is acknowledged as one of the tools for poverty eradication. In this regard, the Plan of Implementation underlined the need for action at all levels to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought and floods through such measures as improved use of climate and weather information and forecasts, early warning systems, land and natural resource management, agricultural practices and ecosystem conservation.

21. Furthermore, paragraph 41 of the Plan of Implementation states the need for action at all levels to "Strengthen the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious

Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, to address causes of desertification and land degradation in order to maintain and restore land, and to address poverty resulting from land degradation".

22. Pursuant to article 1 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Plan of Implementation adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development calls for strengthening the prevention and/or reduction of land degradation, rehabilitation of partly degraded land and reclamation of desertified land, in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, in order to maintain and restore land and to address poverty resulting from land degradation.

C. The Global Environment Facility in the process of the Convention

23. General Assembly resolution 57/259 expressed its satisfaction with regard to the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Second Global Environment Facility Assembly as they related to UNCCD implementation. It recognized the strong commitment of the international community demonstrated at the two gatherings to make the Facility available as a financial mechanism of the Convention.

24. The resolution also invited the Council of the Facility, due to meet in Washington, D.C., from 14 to 16 May 2003, to finalize and adopt the operational programme for land degradation, particularly desertification and deforestation. It further welcomed the decision taken by the Second Assembly of the Global Environment Facility that the Facility would be available to serve as a financial mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and invited the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its sixth session, in response to the call of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the decision of the Second Assembly of the Global Environment Facility, to consider making the Facility a financial mechanism of the Convention.

25. The Global Environment Facility Council met in Washington, D.C., from 14 to 16 May 2003 and approved the Operational Programme on Sustainable Land Management as a framework to operationalize the land degradation focal area. The Council recognized that in the framework of capacity-building projects to be funded under the Operational Programme, the elaboration of national action programmes, subregional action programmes, regional action programmes and national reports were considered as components.

26. Regarding the call made by the World Summit on Sustainable development to make the Facility a financial mechanism of the Convention, it is expected that the Conference of the Parties due to take place in Havana, Cuba, from 25 August to 5 September 2003, will take a decision in this regard.

27. Additional funding from the Facility is expected to add crucial momentum to the implementation process of the Convention that has been delayed essentially due to lack of predictable and substantial financial resources.

D. Action programmes

28. The General Assembly noted with appreciation the increased number of developing countries that have adopted their national, subregional and regional

action programmes, and urged the affected parties that have not yet done so to accelerate the process of elaboration and adoption of their action programmes, with a view to finalizing them as soon as possible.

29. In this regard, the General Assembly also invited affected developing countries to place the implementation of their action programmes to combat desertification high among their priorities in their dialogue with their development partners.

30. As at June 2003, 66 affected countries have finalized the elaboration of their national action programmes to combat desertification (NAPs). In most cases these programmes have been adopted by the respective Governments. At the subregional and regional levels, seven subregional action programmes and four regional action programmes have been finalized.

31. Through the preparation and finalization of action programmes, the implementation of the Convention has been intensified in affected countries of all regions. The main emphasis continues to be on supporting partnership arrangements for fostering the implementation of these programmes, and for establishing linkages between the action programmes and other sustainable national strategies.

E. Synergies with other relevant conventions and organizations

32. The General Assembly noted the ongoing work of the liaison group of the secretariats and officers of the relevant subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Biological Diversity, and encouraged further cooperation to promote complementarities among the three Conventions while respecting their independent legal status.

33. The Conference of Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification has through various decisions called for closer collaboration among the Rio Conventions and other relevant international organizations and conventions. At its fifth session, the Conference expressed its support for the integration of approaches between the Conventions on climate change, biological diversity and desertification. The fifth session of the Conference also requested the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) to include in its programme of work consideration of land and soil degradation and its linkages to other environmental conventions. In addition, the session requested the Committee on Science and Technology to enhance cooperation with the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and to report to the sixth session of the Conference of Parties on that cooperation. The fifth session also encouraged relevant international organizations, institutions and agencies to promote synergies in their mobilization of resources in support of the objectives of the Convention to Combat Desertification.

34. In accordance with decision V/23 of the fifth session of the Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity, an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on the Biodiversity of Dry and Sub-humid Lands was established by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice jointly with the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

The AHTEG meeting was convened twice in Montreal, Canada, from 18 to 22 March and from 23 to 27 September 2002 where it addressed, inter alia, the status and trends of biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands, including indicators of the status and trends of biodiversity, monitoring and early warning systems, in a wide range of natural habitats, as well as the processes affecting biodiversity, including the importance of addressing the underlying causes of processes affecting biodiversity.

35. The consideration of capacity development and the need of some parties for assistance in seeking resources to develop proposals were discussed at length. The Expert Group also welcomed the "Operational guidelines for expedited funding of national self assessments of capacity-building needs", spearheaded by the Global Environment Facility, which aims at assisting the capacity-building of developing countries.

36. Harmonizing sectoral policies and instruments to promote the conservation and sustainable use of the biological diversity of dry and sub-humid lands were also considered, including, inter alia, by taking advantage of the existing national action programmes under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, as well as, as appropriate, other existing and relevant sectoral plans and policies. It was noted that many action programmes in various fields relating to biological diversity have been designed and implemented by the country parties.

37. The results of the work of the Expert Group were presented to the eighth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice in March 2003. The secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification was closely involved in the work of this Expert Group.

38. The UNCCD secretariat also participated in the first and second meetings of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biological Diversity and Climate Change of the Convention on Biological Diversity (Helsinki, Finland, January 2002, and Montreal, Canada, September 2002), as well as in the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (The Hague, the Netherlands, April 2002).

39. Regarding collaboration with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and pursuant to relevant decisions of their respective governing bodies, the secretariats of both Conventions, through a series of consultative meetings, have also identified a number of areas where collaboration can be enhanced. Among these, the secretariats have identified methodological issues such as adaptation strategies in countries with arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas; land use, land-use change and forestry issues; information systems; national profiles and national action programmes to combat desertification and issues relating to national communications and national reports, including guidelines, assessments and reviews.

40. The UNCCD secretariat participated in the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Marrakesh, Morocco, October/November 2001), as well as the sixteenth session of the Subsidiary Body for the Scientific and Technological Advice (Bonn, Germany, June 2002).

41. Furthermore, the Framework Convention on Climate Change of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, at its fourteenth session, endorsed the

formation of a Joint Liaison Group (JLG) between the secretariats of the Framework Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity. It requested the secretariat of the Framework Convention to invite the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification secretariat to participate in this Group in order to enhance coordination between the three Conventions, and to explore options for further cooperation, including the possibility of a joint work plan and/or a workshop. In response to this invitation, the UNCCD Executive Secretary joined the Joint Liaison Group.

42. As already reported to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, the first meeting and second meetings of the Joint Liaison Group took place respectively in Washington, D.C., on 6 December 2001 and New York, on 30 January 2002. The participants to the first meeting included the executive secretaries of the three Conventions, officers of the subsidiary bodies and members of the secretariats. The purpose of the meeting was to exchange information from recent meetings of the three Conventions, to share information on plans for the forthcoming year and to explore opportunities to enhance cohesion between the three secretariats and their respective subsidiary bodies.

43. The purpose of the second meeting was to exchange information on the work of the subsidiary bodies, to consider a draft joint calendar and list of priority events, and to review progress in the preparations for the joint workshop on synergy approaches. The chairs of the subsidiary bodies of the three Conventions reported on activities, conclusions and decisions relevant to the Joint Liaison Group. The meeting called for closer collaboration among the subsidiary bodies of the Conventions, with a view to enhancing synergies, particularly at the country level. The meeting also agreed to proceed with identifying resources to support the joint workshop.

44. The third meeting of the Joint Liaison Group took place in The Hague, the Netherlands, on 16 April 2002, in the sidelines of the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The meeting agreed to a joint calendar of events relevant to the three Conventions, which was to be published on the web sites of the respective Conventions. The calendar would include links providing easy access to the complete calendars of activities under the three Conventions. In addition, an internal tool to facilitate the participation of members of each secretariat in key events organized by the other secretariats has been developed.

45. The meeting also agreed that a joint exhibition by the secretariats of the three Conventions would be held during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) to display information on achievements since the Earth Summit in 1992 and to provide joint programmatic and organizational information on the three Conventions. In this connection, the UNCCD secretariat also facilitated a side event at the Johannesburg Summit on watershed management and reforestation to combat desertification in drylands, jointly organized by the Governments of Niger and Italy, at which the impact of large-scale reforestation schemes on carbon sequestration and conservation of biodiversity in an integrated rural development project was preliminarily assessed.

46. Regarding collaboration with the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the secretariats have agreed that there was a convergence of interests and objectives between the Conventions on desertification and on migratory species and that they could enter into collaborative ventures for the

benefit of their respective parties. The two secretariats have identified fields for possible cooperation and critical sites where joint activities could be developed.

47. Consultative meetings with the secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on wetlands have focused on implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 1998 and identification of key areas for synergy development.

48. As far as coordination of programmes of work between the two Conventions was concerned, it was decided that each secretariat would encourage its respective parties and national focal points to hold joint consultative meetings as a part of their reporting processes. In addition, it was agreed that the two secretariats would also make arrangements for holding annual consultative meetings.

49. At its sixteenth session, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technical Advice, noting potential synergies with the Ramsar Convention on wetlands, encouraged the Joint Liaison Group to invite the secretariat of the Ramsar Convention to share information and to participate in the meetings of the Group, as appropriate.

F. Action by States

50. As of July 2003 instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession had been deposited by the following 186 States and one regional economic integration organization: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Niue, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Republic of the Congo, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and the European Community.

III. Action requested from the General Assembly

51. In paragraph 18 of its resolution 57/259, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to its fifty-eighth session on the implementation of that resolution. The present report has been produced in response to that request.

52. The General Assembly may wish to take note of the outcomes of the Council and Assembly of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) regarding the designation of land degradation (desertification and deforestation) as an additional focal area of the Facility, the designation of the Facility as a financial mechanism to the Convention and the adoption of its operational programme.

53. Likewise, the Assembly may wish to take note of the conclusions of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) relevant to the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and reaffirm the important role of the Convention as a prime tool to combat poverty. Since poverty is widespread in rural dry lands of developing countries, the Assembly may echo that role and identify the Convention as one of the means to achieve the Millennium Development Goals as they relate to poverty eradication and hunger elimination.

54. In accordance with the institutional arrangements between the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the United Nations, the General Assembly may also wish to take action for the required provisions to be made in the calendar of conferences and meetings for the biennium 2004-2005 for the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, including the seventh ordinary session of the Conference of the Parties and meetings of its subsidiary bodies.

55. The General Assembly may also wish to reiterate its appeal for the funding of the Convention, particularly regarding contributions to the core budget, which are due to be paid promptly every 1 January.